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MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES.

Baltimore, November, 1889.

THE LEGEND OF ST. MARGARET.*

I.—BRIEF SKETCH OF ITS DEVELOPMENT.

It is not difficult to fix, at least approximately, the time of the occurrences recorded in the Legend of St. Margaret. The great Antiochian persecution during which the presbyter Lucius suffered martyrdom took place under the joint rule of Diocletian and Maximian.

Maximin was intrusted in 305 with the sovereignty of Syria and Egypt, and, on the death of Galerius, he added to his provinces that of Asia Minor. Between the date 305 and that of Maximin's death (313) the martyrdom of St. Margaret, if we are to grant its historic existence, must certainly fall. That we have no historic record of it is not surprising; the occurrence in its unvarnished actuality was commonplace in such an epoch of wholesale martyrdom; and, further, it was the policy of the persecutors to destroy all the writings of their Christian victims, so that the events in question were probably recorded according to hearsay evidence at some later period. The supernatural accessories of the story are found in the earliest forms in which it has been preserved to us. In establishing the date the manuscripts do not give much assistance beyond that afforded by the incidents recorded. The earliest manuscripts had no date assigned, for any such information is wanting in nearly all the manuscripts which are at our disposal. An exception is the Latin manuscript B. M. Ar 169 (XIIIth Cent.), which begins "Annorum ab incarnatione domini salvatoris fere ducentorum nonaginta circulusolvebatur." It seems probable that this is an original addition by some scribe who had made for himself the necessary historic researches. The English version MS. Harl. 2277 (XIVth Cent.) reads:

"Lither was themperor Diocletian,
Lither was his felawe ek, that het Maximian."

An old English alliterative version (MS. Bodl. 34) gives the date of the month, following, no doubt, the day and month for which

*This article is extracted, for the most part, from a dissertation entitled "La Vie de Sainte Marguerite," published for the University of Leipzig (May 1889).

the life appointed in the Latin Passionals was that of St. Margaret. The MS. reads "i the moneth that on ure ledene is ald englich efterlith, inempnet iulius o latin, o the twentuthe dei" (Cockayne E. E. T. S., No. 13). The MS. Ashm. (printed by Horstmann, 'Altenglische Legenden') adds a detail which is almost humorous:

"On a tewsdey sche was quyke and dede."

Further notice as to date I have not discovered in any of the many versions consulted. It remains then to ascertain the date approximately by independent historic evidence, which gives as superior and inferior limits the years 305 and 313.

The story is an Oriental one and, in any effort to trace its development, it is to the East that we must look for its original form and for any collateral evidence as to its authenticity! Such evidence is however not forthcoming. The oldest Syrian Martyrology extant (MS. addit. 12150, published by Wright in the *Journal of Sacred Literature* VIII, 45), although assigning many martyrs and confessors to the town of Antioch, includes no reference to our saint. Had such a reference been there, it would have assisted very materially to establish the authenticity of the legend; but, on the other hand, the mutilated state of the manuscript absolves us from the conclusion that Saint Margaret was not acknowledged at the epoch of its composition. We have, however, evidence that to the Greek church this legend was not unknown. Symeon Metaphrastes (Xth Cent.) as quoted by Surius (Venice 1581, IV, 86) reads: "Marina, quam latinae ecclesiae Margaritam vocant," and this double nomenclature accompanies the legend in many of its developments. In the British Museum Library there is a Greek version of the life of St. Marina, dating however only from the XVIth century (25881). But it is to the Latin church and to the revival of letters under Charlemagne that we must refer the first extensive development of the legend as it is preserved to us. The life of St. Margaret of Antioch was assigned to the date XIV Kal. Aug. in the Latin Passionals, and the life of St. Marina—identical in all

points with the former—is often given a few pages earlier at the date III Id. Jul., the order being sometimes reversed.

Rabanus (IXth Cent.) gives a brief life of the saint, mentioning all the salient points of the expanded legend: "vinculae, carceres, flagella, equuleum, diabolus in draconis specie, similiter et in aethiopis," etc. In the Martyrology of Usuardus (IXth Cent.), at the date XIII Kal. Aug., Migne records a marginal reading (probably a later interpolation): Eodem die sanctae . . . garitae virginis et martiris." It must have been during this and the following century that St. Margaret gradually obtained a permanent place in the Western martyrologies, for although Ado (IXth Cent.) and Aelfric (Xth Cent.) do not mention her name, Notker (circ. 1000) includes her among the martyrs, and assigns her the date III Id. Jul. (Migne CXXXI, 1119), and the testimony of Rabanus has already been adduced. It is certain that from this period the *Passio* St. Margaretæ was found in the library of most monasteries, and its diffusion followed close on that of the Christian religion itself. Latin texts of the legend abound in many countries—in the British Museum alone there are 16, exclusive of those contained in collections—and amply attest the popularity of the story: we shall presently see how these versions have been everywhere followed by versions in the vernacular. The legend was also reproduced in many Latin Hymns of the Middle Ages and of the Renaissance, especially in Italy.

It must here be remarked that, though the sensational and supernatural details were to be found in the earliest forms of the legend, they were, by many, sceptically regarded from the first. Symeon Metaphrastes discounted them as the malicious invention of scoffers, if not of the evil one himself: a gentilibus forte, aut ab haereticis et profanis, et veritatis intelligentia privatis viris . . . pravae ac sceleratae mentis execranda figmenta, ad Christi et sanctorum eius contumeliam composita." Jacobus a Voragine (circa 1250) in the *Golden Legend* (Graesse, Leipzig 1850) has also: "istud autem quod dicitur de draconis devoratione, et ipsius crepatione, apocryphum et frivolum reputatur." The

Bollandists have also adhered to this judgment in their *Acta SS.*

To attempt a descriptive catalogue of the old French MSS. in which some form of this legend is found, would be beyond the limits of this essay. So far back as 1875, P. MEYER indicates the existence of at least four rhymed versions, one of which occurs in thirty manuscripts.

In the library of Tours there exists a copy of a version of Wace, which has been fully described by LUZARCHE (1873) and edited by JOLY (1879). It contains about 420 lines of 8-syllable verse, the first part of the poem being wanting. This manuscript appeared to JOLY to contain a unique copy of the version: he assigns the date 1250 to the copy, and places the original 50 years earlier. But P. MEYER (*Romania* VIII, 275) indicates the existence of a complete copy of WACE's Version of which he quotes the opening lines. As an appendix to JOLY's edition (Vieweg, Paris 1879) we find the text of the MS. B. N. 19525, written at the end of the XIIIth century, also in octosyllabic verse, which the editor claims as having WACE for its source. He adds further the text of the MS. B. N. 1555 (early XVth Cent.), an octosyllabic version with signs of a different origin. Both these latter were edited by SCHELER (Antwerp 1877). In the "*Bulletin du Bibliophile Belge*" (vol. IV, 1847) we find an old French rhymed version, communicated by BARON LÉON BE HERKENRODE, and copied by him from a manuscript which had evidently been used as an amulet. Sixteen years later (Hannover 1863) a slightly varying copy of the same version was published by W. L. HOLLAND. This editor does not seem to have been aware of the earlier publication of his version, as an appendix to which he prints a German prose version of the XVth century. He also draws attention to a Middle-Dutch version published in the *Belgisches Museum* (Ghent 1837), the existence of which corroborates JOLY's statement as to the popularity of the legend in Belgium.

JOLY indicates 10 manuscript copies (*Bibl. Nat.*) of various forms of the legend, three of which date from the XIIIth and the rest from the XIVth and XVth centuries. He also

mentions two XVth Century MSS. in the Bibl. de l'Arsenal, and three prose versions (XIII., XIV., XVth Cent.) in the Bibl. Nationale. There are in the British Museum Library various versions of the legend both in prose and verse. These are Dom. d. XI, 8, Harl. 2947, Sloane 1611, all in rhymed octosyllabic couplets,¹ and Reg. 20. D. VI. 46, a life of St. Marina in prose.

We have, further, two important Anglo-Norman versions in Alexandrine verse arranged in "laisses monorimes" of varying length. They occur in the Cambridge University Manuscript Ee VI. XI.,² (XIIIth Cent.) and the York Minster MS. XVI. K. 13,³ (early XIVth Cent.), no second copy of either version being known to exist. Both of these versions will be printed in a continuation of this paper, and are therefore only briefly referred to here.

The popularity of the legend did not cease with the invention of printing, for there exist many printed versions both in prose and in verse. BRUNET mentions eight verse editions, all published about the year 1500.

If any further proof of its popularity be needed, we have it in the existence of a Provençal version. In 1875 (P. MEYER, *Rom.* IV, 482) there were only seven known lives of saints in the southern vernacular, and one of these saints was St. Margaret, a Provençal version of whose 'Passion' in octosyllabic verse was published in that year by NOULET (Toulouse). Apropos of this edition, P. MEYER indicates the existence of a parallel and more correct Provençal text in Stockholm, by the aid of which he is enabled to correct the text published by NOULET.

¹ Part of the version of the Sloane MS. is in Alexandrine couplets. This version and that of the Harl. MS. contain from six to seven hundred lines, whereas the version Dom. XI. has less than four hundred. The writer of the shorter poem regards his work from a purely commercial standpoint.—(fol. 97. 3) "Margarete ore pensez

De moy cheytif ke ay translatez
Vostre vie e vostre passlon.
Ke Dieu me grante sauvacon,
E a touz cels ke cest escrit
Orrunt o lirrunt o delit.
Ces est le covenant avant fet.
Ore seit gardé, si vos plet" (!)

² For description of this MS. see *Romania* XV, 268.

³ Described in the MOD. LANG. NOTES of December 1888.

In Italy, Saint Margaret was among the most widely venerated saints of the Middle Ages. Tradition indeed asserts that her remains were conveyed to Brindisi, and found a final resting place at Montefiascone. Lambecius (Comment. de Biblioth. Vindobon. 1669, vol. II) indicates "Volumen membranaceum in quarto, multis imaginibus exornatum, quo continetur (1) Vita et Passio S. Margaretæ virginis et martyris, composita antiquis rhythmis Italicis." Its lines, which he quotes, are :

Omnio mo intende e staga impace
Chi vole oldire de uno sermone verace,
De una legenda molta bella
De una sanctissima ponzella,
Che multo fu fidele a Deo
E lo spirito sancto fu in leo.
Ela haveve nome Malgarita.

In the British Museum (MS. Harl. 5347) we have an Italian verse life of the late XIVth Cent. ascribed to a certain Tectino, but only differing from the last mentioned version by the addition of an introduction which has hitherto served to conceal the identity of the two poems. It is brilliantly, if not artistically, illustrated, and contains some 1200 lines. To the further development of this legend in Italy I shall refer again later. GRAESSE mentions printed Italian versions of the XVIth century.

In Spain, too, our saint enjoyed great popularity. FLOREZ (España Sagrada, Marin, 1763) points out that there were 16 churches named after her in the bishopric of Orense alone, besides large numbers in the contiguous sees. L. PANNIER (St. Alexis 339) also indicates the existence of Spanish versions of our legend. FLOREZ (vol. XVII) discusses a current ecclesiastical tradition that the scene of St. Marina was a district Limia in Galicia, where, it was alleged, there had existed towns known as Antiochia and Arminia (later Armea). Indeed various so-called relics of the saint were preserved in the neighborhood of Aguas Santas, the authenticity of which, however, FLOREZ declares to be doubtful: "del carballo, de los hornos, y del agujero (incapaz de admitir cuerpo, ni aun de un niño) . . . y otras individualidades que no tienen mas apoyo que de un vulgo Protéo." The origin of this fiction was apparently a corrupt reading of the Latin (cf.

note on 319). The Seville breviary read: "in campo Limiae sub urbe Armenia," where the original Latin had "in Decapoli et urbe Armenia." FLOREZ sums up (XVII, 221) as follows: Concluyo en fin que admito una Santa Marina martir en este obispado (Orense), laqual no tiene conexion con el presidente Olibrio del Oriente, ni con otras particularidades de la martyrizada en Antioquia de Pisidia: sino que la presente fue Gallega: pero ignorandose como en otros santos martires las particularidades de su vida y martirio, la aplicaron las del Oriente, lo que para ser afirmado de la nuestra, necesita mas abonadas pruebas."

Nor do we seek in vain among Teutonic nationalities for the preservation of our legend. We have already remarked the mention of our saint by Notker of St. Gallen. An old German version, referred to the XIIth Cent., was published by HAUPT (from a Berlin MS.) in the *Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum* I (Leipzig, 1841). In *Germania* (1859, p. 440) BARTSCH has printed another text, the original of which he also refers to the XIIth Cent., and which is found in the Prague MS. XVI G. XIX. A kindred version was discovered by WAGNER at Klosterneuburg, and is discussed and compared with the Prague version in *Germania* (1852 p. 268). While writing this essay, I learn that the librarian of the Trier Library has discovered a fragment of a Middle High German verse legend of St. Margaret for which he claims a higher antiquity than is assigned to the complete versions above referred to. Other extant German versions are mentioned by HOLLAND in his introduction. In the XIVth century HARTWIG VON DEM HAGE made the sufferings of St. Margaret the subject of one of his poems, as did the English poet LYDGATE a century later. In the first years of the XIVth Cent. printed versions were published in Köln, a reprint of which may be found in SCHADE's 'Geistliche Gedichte des XIV. und XV. Jahrhunderts vom Niederrhein' (Hannover 1854).

Mediaeval English Literature also contributes largely to the materials at our disposal for establishing the wide-spread popularity of St. Margaret. An early English prose version, dating from the XIth century, was published

by COCKAYNE in his *Narratiunculae* (1861). For the Early English Text Society the same writer published (in 1866) various English versions of the legend. The first (MS. Bodl. 34 and others) is an alliterative poem (date about 1200), and is specially remarkable as containing an incident⁴ invented by its writer which has no parallel in any other known version.

In the same volume COCKAYNE prints a version in verse (Harl. 2277), executed about 1330 and dating from 1300. He adds also the version printed by HICKS (*Thesaurus* I, 224) from a manuscript formerly in Trin. Coll. Camb. Library, now in the British Museum, the original of which HORSTMANN refers to the early part of the XIIIth Cent. In HORSTMANN (*Altenglische Legenden; neue Folge*) we have two versions of the legend (Meidan Margaret) which the editor attributes to the early XIVth and to the middle of the XVth Cent. respectively. The MS. Cantab. Ff II, 38 contains an English prose version of the XVth Cent., and the legend was also "compendiously compiled in balade by Lidgate dan John, monk of Bury" (edited by HORSTMANN, *Ae. Leg.*)

There remains to be noticed a Scottish version of the legend, contained in the Cambridge MS. published by HORTSMANN, and attributed by the editor (though by no other scholar of note) to the poet JOHN BARBOUR. The author, as indeed in most of the other legends which he treats, draws largely from the "Aurea Legenda." The introduction, for instance, is clearly taken from the work of J. a VORAGINE. It commences:

Qwa wil the vertu wyt of stanis
In the lapidar ma fynd, ane is
Of thame, that callyt is "Margarit"
Vertuyse, lytil, clere, and quhyt . . . etc.

But the poet appears to have consulted other versions. Compare, e. g., "Tyne nocht my sawle with fellone mene" with Camb. Ee VI, 11 (v. 88) "ne perdez m'alme ho ces maves felluns;" and "as a schepe ymang wlfis" with "com owaillye entre lus." The expanded form of the legend, as compared with the "Aurea Legenda," shows indeed undoubted signs of large appropriation from other sources.

⁴ A wooing scene between "a clean man and a clean woman."

Any one who has read the legend of St. Margaret in any of its more expanded forms cannot wonder at the immense popularity which it obtained during the Middle Ages. The reading of this Passio was said to produce the instant and safe delivery of women in labor. There is a strange irony in the process of legend-development by which the resolutely pure virgin is made to preside graciously over the pains of child-bed. JOLY (p. 26) quotes passages from miracle plays in illustration of this belief, and PANNIER (St. Alexis 339) draws attention to a passage in Rabelais where Gargamelle refers superciliously to the reputation of our saint. But the benefactions of St. Margaret were by no means confined to gracious presidency over the pangs of parturition. Whoever wrote a copy of her Passion, or read it in a right spirit, or even heard it read, was to receive absolution of sin, and of sin's visible effects in the flesh. Whoever invoked her sincerely should be heard promptly. And he who dedicated a church, or even a candle, to her memory should know no limit to the power of his petition. No saint could possibly enjoy greater popularity, if popularity depend upon variety of potential benefaction.

"Vengron horbs, sex e mutz
Contrayt, gloes maladobatz,
Totz partiro d'aqui sanatz"

(NOULET : quoted by J.).

And so through all the versions. The credulity of the church outlived the invention of printing. An Italian copy of the legend (Venice : XVIth Cent.) bears the title "Legenda et oratione di S. Margherita, historiata : La qual oratione legendola, over ponendola adosso a una donna che non potesse parturire, subito parturirà senza pericolo;" and d'Esternod (Espadon Satyrique) completing the description of a woman who was a finished hypocrite adds:

"De sainte Marguerite elle sait la légende."

Even royalty was not behindhand in the cult of our saint. JOLY writes (p. 29), adducing numerous historic examples: "Ce sont des reines qui successivement proclament la foi des femmes de France dans l'intervention de la Sainte au moment le plus critique de leur vie. Elle est à plusieurs reprises solennellement invoquée pour des royales

naissances." He also points out (p. 23) how much of the painting and sculpture of the Middle Ages, and of later times, was inspired by the story of Margaret's martyrdom, instancing, among other works, a chef-d'œuvre of Raphael, now in the Louvre Gallery. The pastoral coloring of the legend gave it in the country districts a popularity equal to that which it obtained among the more cultured portion of the population. Its sensational incidents lend themselves easily to rude dramatic form, and about the year 1500 it was adapted still more to the taste of the masses by being produced in the form of a Mystery play. For a description of this particular development in France, it suffices to refer to the interesting little book of Mr. JOLY, who gives copious extracts from a unique copy in the Bibl. Nationale. It is highly probable that the same development took place in other countries. For this conjecture there is due support in the case of Italy, on the authority of GRAESSE, who mentions certain dramatic representations of the Passio dating from the XIVth century.

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ORIGIN OF 'THE FLOWER AND THE LEAF.'

'The Flower and the Leaf,' first published in SPEGHT's edition of 1597, has been, since TYRWHITT first expressed his doubts with regard to its authenticity as a work of CHAUCER, the subject of frequent criticism. PROFESSORS TEN BRINK and SKEAT, with others, are inclined to regard the poem as a post-Chaucerian production, PROF. SKEAT even venturing to say: "written by a woman, and clearly belonging to the fifteenth century." All critics have noticed the influence of MACHAULT, DESCHAMPS and FROISSART in the selection of the well-known allegory representing the merits of the flower and the leaf, but none seem as yet to have called attention to a poem which may have furnished the plan or structure upon which this allegory has been superposed. Such a model-poem could have been suggested by a *lay* of EUSTACHE DESCHAMPS, entitled "Ci commence le lay de